



Greg Champagne
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N e w s R e l e a s e

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Sheriff's Office Now Accepting Applications for 3rd Citizen's Academy

Ever wondered how cops solve crimes? Residents who want to know more about police work can find out first-hand at Sheriff's Office's third Citizens Academy, which is now taking applications for its next class. The nine-week course begins in January. Residents who sign up will get a closer look at how 21st Century police work is done, from forensics to school security.

Residents who attended the 2012 class said they found it useful and informative.

"I think every resident of St. Charles Parish should go to one of these," said Mary Jeansonne of Des Allemands. "I enjoyed every session." Sheriff Greg Champagne said he hopes the attendees will share their knowledge with neighbors and friends. "If citizens have a better understanding of what we do and why, they are in a better position to help us keep our community safe," Sheriff Champagne said.

Residents who are interested in the course must fill out a short application at www.stcharlessheriff.org, pass a background check, and commit to attending all nine of the weekly classes, which are currently scheduled weekly from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. over the course of nine weeks. Attendees must live or work in St. Charles Parish to qualify. The course topics include sessions about how the Criminal Investigation Bureau, Special Response Teams and K-9 units operate, as well as getting a look inside the Nelson Coleman Correctional Center and the Firing Range.

"It was a wonderful experience," said Jacquelyn Johnson of St. Rose. "Not only were you informed, but you get to meet the people." Johnson said she was particularly impressed with the forensics, which is the gathering of physical evidence used to solve crimes and to prosecute those responsible. She said she also learned more about crime prevention. "If something is going wrong in my neighborhood, I don't have a problem calling," she said. Johnson said she is trying to persuade some of her neighbors to take the class. "People need to get involved."

Montz resident Norma-Jean Montz said she learned more about community programs the department offers, such as TRIAD, which focuses on senior citizens. She said the program also helped her appreciate the dangers that officers face every day. "From what I've learned at the academy, I've become more aware of my surroundings. I feel more comfortable with the entire process of law enforcement now that I know what is available and my role in the process," she said.

Boutte resident Melvyn Duplantis, another member of the class of 2012, said he was impressed by the skills that officers bring to the streets. "What impressed me is the training and the re-training that the officers have to do to keep themselves up to date," said Duplantis, a retired Union Carbide employee who took the course with his wife Sandra. "I think every Joe Citizen should know what police do," he said.